

March 28, 2009

SPRINGFIELD, PA—Congressman Joe Sestak (Pa-07) spoke and danced at Springfield High School's seventh annual 15-hour Dance Marathon on March 27, 2009. The event is held each year in memory of Mr. Steve Stefani, beloved teacher and friend of the school. This student-sponsored event is affiliated with the annual Penn State University Dance Marathon, the nation's largest student-run philanthropy. Springfield students, in conjunction with Penn State University, raised money for The Four Diamonds Fund, a philanthropy that benefits pediatric cancer patients who are treated at the Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey, PA. Student dancers stayed on their feet for the entire 15-hour Dance Marathon for this great cause.

"I'm absolutely inspired by everyone here tonight," said Congressman Sestak. "As you know, this is very personal to me. My own daughter, Alex, is a brain cancer survivor. My family and I are very thankful for your efforts here tonight."

Childhood Cancer Facts

Childhood cancers are the #1 disease killer of children - more than asthma, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and pediatric AIDS combined.

Childhood cancer is not a single disease, but rather many different types that fall into 12 major categories. Common adult cancers are extremely rare in children, yet many cancers are almost exclusively found in children.

Childhood Cancers are cancers that primarily affect children, teens, and young adults. When cancer strikes children and young adults it affects them differently than it would an adult.

Attempts to detect childhood cancers at an earlier stage, when the disease would react more favorably to treatment, have largely failed. Young patients often have a more advanced stage of cancer when first diagnosed. (Approximately 20% of adults with cancer show evidence the disease has spread, yet almost 80% of children show that the cancer has spread to distant sites at the time of diagnosis).

Cancer in childhood occurs regularly, randomly, and spares no ethnic group, socioeconomic class, or geographic region.

The cause of most childhood cancers are unknown and at present, cannot be prevented. (Most

adult cancers result from lifestyle factors such as smoking, diet, occupation, and other exposure to cancer-causing agents).

One in every 330 Americans will develop cancer by the age of 20. On the average, 12,500 children and adolescents in the U.S. are diagnosed with cancer each year.

On the average, 1 in every 4 elementary school has a child with cancer. The average high school has two students who are a current or former cancer patient. In the U.S., about 46 children and adolescents are diagnosed with cancer every weekday.

While the cancer death rate has dropped more dramatically for children than for any other age group, 2,300 children and teenagers will die each year from cancer.

Childhood leukemia (making up the largest group of childhood cancers) was once a certain death sentence, but now can be cured almost 80% of the time.

Today, up to 75% of the children with cancer can be cured, yet some forms of childhood cancers have proven so resistant to treatment that, in spite of research, a cure is still elusive.

Several childhood cancers continue to have a very poor prognosis, including: brain stem tumors, metastatic sarcomas, relapsed acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and relapsed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Information on the Four Diamonds Fund

Charles and Irma Millard established The Four Diamonds Fund in 1972 after the death of their son, Christopher, who was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 11. Today a board of civic leaders from counties throughout Central Pennsylvania advises the Fund.

How the Fund got its name and what it means

The Four Diamonds Fund is named after a story that Christopher Millard wrote shortly before he lost his battle with cancer at the age of 14. In Chris' story, a knight must find the four diamonds of Courage, Wisdom, Honesty and Strength in order to be released from captivity by an evil sorceress. The four diamonds are symbolic of the traits Chris believed were necessary to overcome cancer.

Families Served

Since 1972, The Four Diamonds Fund has served more than 2,000 families, primarily from the

Central PA area, but also from surrounding states. Approximately 100 new families a year become Four Diamonds families. Our commitment to these children extends into their adulthood. With some patients in their thirties, their survival offers hope for better treatment and a cure for all childhood cancer.

How The Fund Supports Children and Families

Financial Support

The Fund covers all expenses for the care and treatment of the children not paid for by insurance or other means. In addition, the Fund assists families with expenses that have the potential to disrupt the welfare of their child, by paying for necessary expenses such as car repairs, rent, or household utilities.

Medical Team Support

The Four Diamonds Fund supports staff members who provide comprehensive care through a team comprised of pediatric oncologists, nurse specialists, social workers, child life specialists, a clinical nutritionist, a clinical psychologist, and a music therapist.

Research Support

Since 1993, The Four Diamonds Fund has annually supported research projects that relate to pediatric cancer and conducted at Penn State College of Medicine. In 1999, the Fund established The Four Diamonds Pediatric Cancer Research Institute with a \$5 million commitment from the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, which they completed in three years, two years ahead of their anticipated date. The goal of the endowment is to positively impact the lives of children with cancer around the world, now and in the future. Dr. Ken Lucas holds the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon Chair for Pediatric Research and Dr. Barbara A. Miller holds the Christopher Millard Chair for Pediatric Research.

How Funds Are Raised

In 1977, The Four Diamonds Fund became the beneficiary of the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON™), the largest student-run philanthropy in the nation. The most recent THON, in February 2007, raised over \$5.2 million for The Four Diamonds Fund. Inspired by THON, 34 local high school and middle schools have held their own mini dance marathons and have contributed significantly to the Fund. during the 2006-2007 school year, the 34 mini-thons raised over \$620,000 in support of the Fund. Other sources of financial support include

community events, corporate donors, foundations, and individuals committed to helping to find a cure for pediatric cancer.

How Funds Are Allocated

Committees consisting of Four Diamonds Advisory Board members and Penn State Children's Hospital staff, and administrators review medical allocations and other related expenses of Four Diamonds families. Once approved by the committees, expenses are referred to and approved by the Advisory Board and Children's Hospital staff.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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